

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Evaluation of Kinship Care Program Outcomes**

**Margery Lindon**

**Kent School of Social Work**

**University of Louisville**

#### **Overview of Program**

Today ensuring permanency in a timely manner for the children we serve continues to be problematic for this agency. The ultimate goal of the Kinship Care Program is permanent custody with a relative if returning the child to the parent is not a viable option. Kinship Care is an alternative to foster care placement and is provided to children who may otherwise be placed in foster care due to: death of both parents or a substantiated finding of abuse or neglect as defined by KRS 600.020(1).

#### **Quantitative Study/*Purpose of Study***

This study provides an insight into a rural regions in Kentucky's Kinship Care Outcomes including: How many relatives in the region actually obtain permanent custody of their kin, How many children are returned to their parents, and How many children remain in kinship placement without being permanently placed? This study will also calculate and test the association between income and children that remain in placement without any type of permanency being established.

#### ***Design/Sample/Measurement***

In this study a post-test only program evaluation was used to evaluate the outcomes of kinship care. This design was non-experimental. The subjects for this study were pulled from a convenient sample of Kinship Care Providers in a rural region in Kentucky during January 2001 to October 2001. Sixty-seven cases were chosen. The quantitative study used secondary data from management reports, CQA's (Continuous Quality Assessments), and the agency database. Variables of interest were: length in care and care status of the children. I tested the hypothesis that the level of income of the kinship family is believed to predict successful outcomes using a ONE WAY ANOVA.

### ***Major Findings/Discussion***

Out of the relatives, 12 gained permanent custody, 3 relatives returned custody to the parents, and 52 relatives still have children in care without any type of permanency established. A One Way ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis if there is a significant relationship between the level of income and permanency status of the children. This test found that there is a significant relationship. The level of income does affect the permanency status of the children. ( $F(2,64) = 12.636, p \geq .05$ ). I went and conducted a Post Hoc Bonferroni. The variables that were found to be significant were: income of those that have obtained permanent custody and income of those that remain in care. The mean of each group was: Those that obtained permanent custody: \$2357.67, Those that were returned home: \$2026.67, and Those that remain in care: \$1266.31.

### ***Qualitative Study/Purpose of Study***

The purpose of this study is to determine if case management services are beneficial as they should be to the Kinship Caregivers

### ***Design/Sample***

I conducted a program evaluation. Structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with 8 Kinship Caregivers using a questionnaire to assess the effectiveness of services being provided by case managers. This study consisted of a convenience sample of eight kinship care providers.

### ***Major Findings/Discussion***

Looking at the common themes found in the responses that were gathered relate that their case managers make monthly home visits and discuss what is going on, they related that the services being provided were assisting them in obtaining permanent custody, they related that they all have the same goal on their case plans which is to obtain permanent custody, and they related that they feel good or pretty good about the overall services that are being provided.

### ***Impact of Practice and Policy Issues***

This research study has the potential to impact social work practice when doing program evaluations. Income does play a large role on relatives obtaining permanent custody. This could be expensive due to expensive Attorney and court fees. This is also important in that there is a strong need for more financial support to assist the relatives in obtaining custody.



# An Evaluation of Kinship Care Program Outcomes

Margery Lindon



# Introduction

- Today ensuring permanency in a timely manner for the children we serve continues to be problematic for this agency. The ultimate goal of Kinship Care is permanent custody with a relative if returning the child to the parent is not a viable option.

# Description of the Kinship Care Program

- Kinship Care is an alternative to foster care placement and is provided to children who may otherwise be placed by the Cabinet in foster care due to: death of both parents; a substantiated finding of abuse or neglect by the Cabinet per KRS 600.020(1)



# Purpose of Study

- This study provides an insight into a rural region in KY's Kinship Care outcomes including:
  - 1) how many relatives in the region actually obtain permanent custody of their kin,
  - 2) how many children are returned to their parents, and
  - 3) how many children remain in kinship placement without being permanently placed.

# Purpose of Study

- A second objective of this study is to calculate and test the association between income and children that remain in placement without any type of permanency being established.
- This study will help determine if case management services are beneficial as they should be to the Kinship Caregivers.



# Research Questions

- **Quantitative:**
- What is the proportion of children who remain in Kinship Care placement, or have established permanency as opposed to how many children are returned to their parent(s)?
- **Qualitative:**
- How do Kinship caregivers view the effectiveness of program services in obtaining permanent custody of their kin?

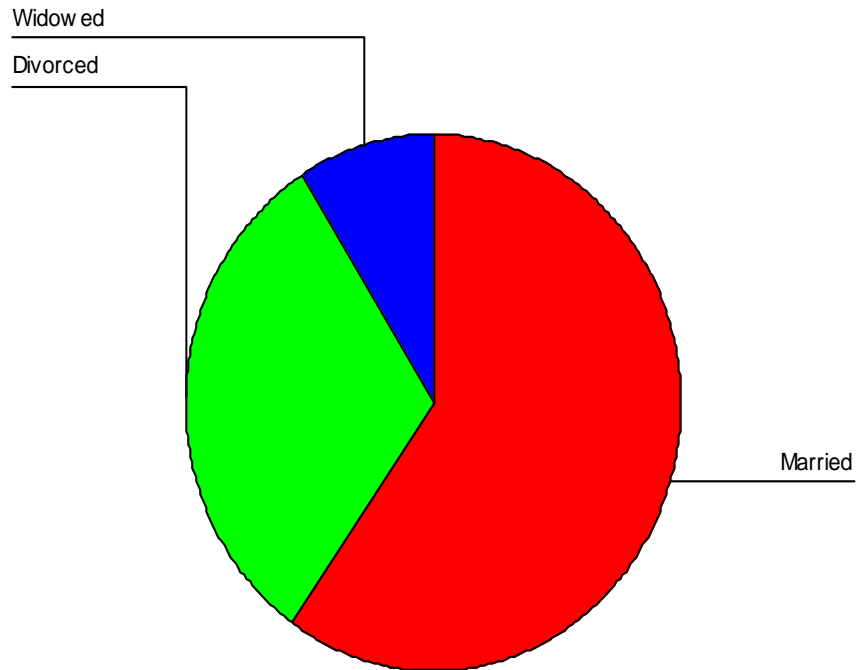


# Importance to Social Work

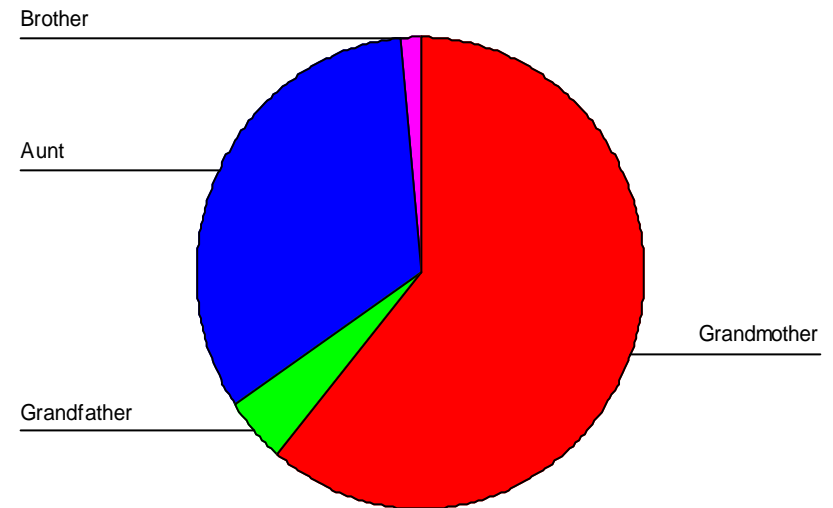
- This study is important to social work as we must evaluate our programs to see that our clients are getting the quality services that they deserve.
- Program evaluations help social workers to see what areas we need to do more work in or make necessary changes to meet the needs of our clients more effectively.

# Demographics

Marital Status



Relationship to the child





# Quantitative Method

- A convenient sample of Kinship Care Providers in a rural region in Kentucky during January 2001 to October 2001
- Secondary data was used from management reports, CQA's (Continuous Quality Assessments), and the agency database
- I tested the hypothesis that the level of income of the kinship family is believed to predict successful outcomes using One Way ANOVA.
- Sample size was 67 cases
- Variables of interest were: length in care and care status

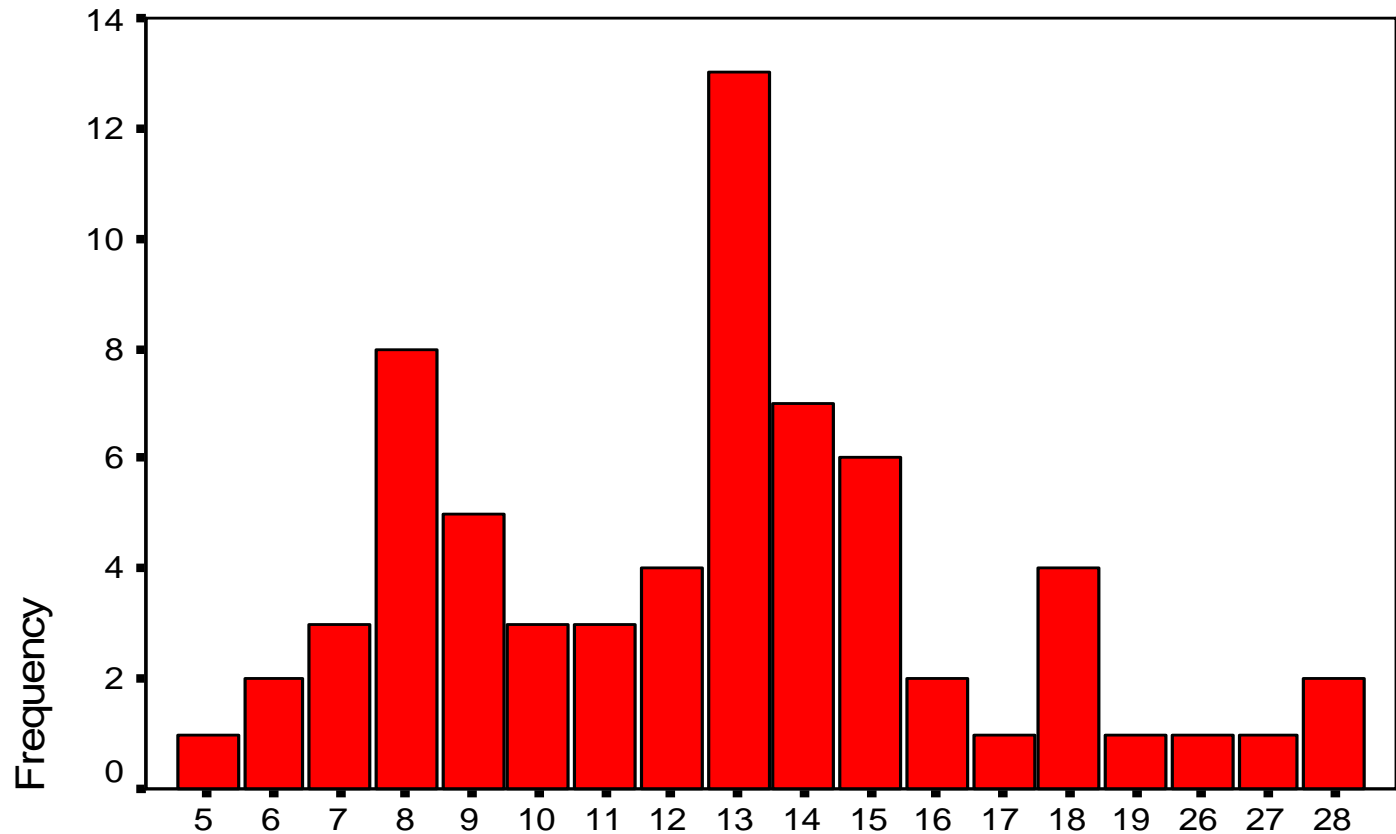
# Qualitative Method

- Structured face to face interviews were conducted using a questionnaire to assess the effectiveness of services being provided by case managers.
- Convenience sample of eight kinship care providers.
- Open-ended interviews with the eight kinship caregivers.



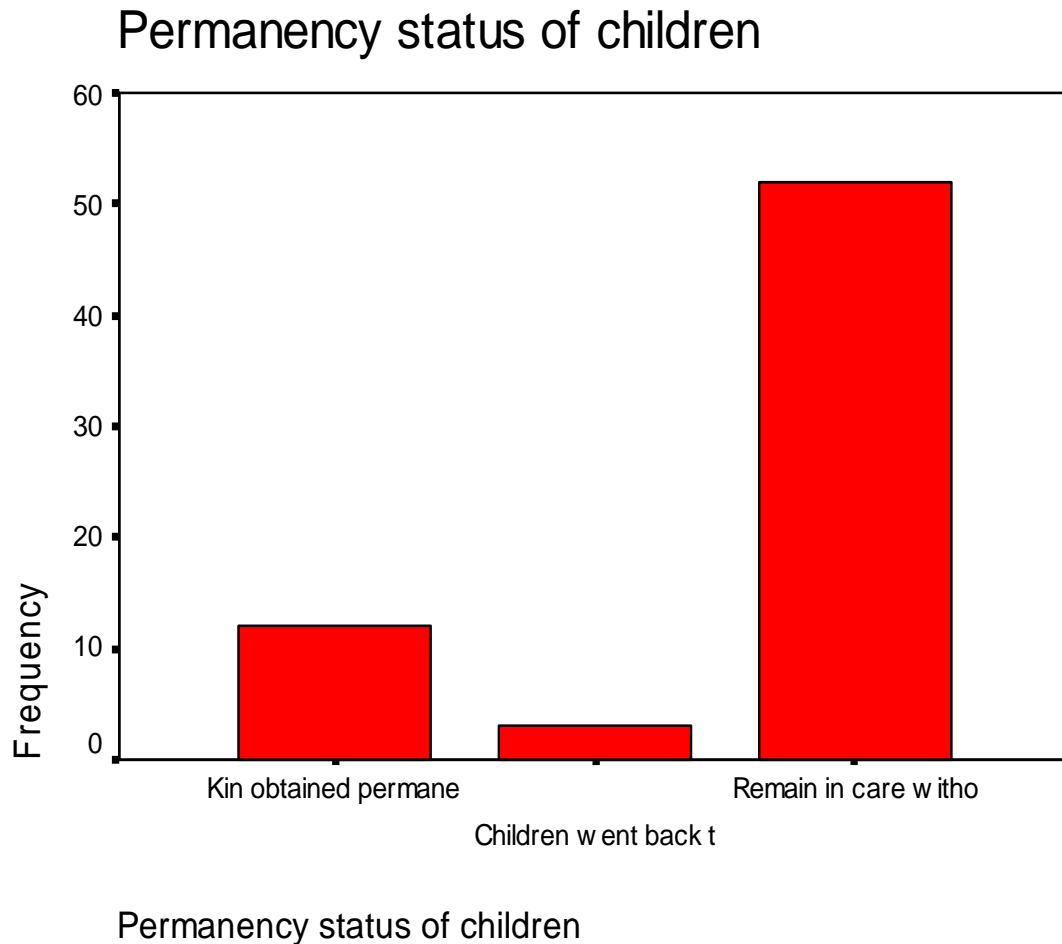
# Results for Quantitative

How long have the children been in your care (in



How long have the children been in your care (in months)

# Results for Quantitative





# Results for Quantitative

- In order to determine if income has an effect on the status of the children, a one way ANOVA was conducted.
- $F(2,64) = 12.636$  ,  $p(.0001) \leq .05$
- This supports the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship. The amount of income does have an effect on relatives obtaining permanent custody. Since the results were significant, I went on to conduct a Post Hoc Bonferoni. The two significant variables were: income of those that have obtained permanent custody and income of those that remain in care.
- The mean of each group was:
- OPC - \$2357.67      RTP - \$2026.67      RIC - \$1266.31



# Results for Qualitative

- I interviewed 8 clients regarding the effectiveness of services.
- All 8 clients related their case manager makes monthly home visits and discusses what has been going on with them.
- Basically all 8 clients related that the services being provided were assisting them in obtaining permanent custody.
- All clients related that they have the same goal on their case plan which is to gain permanent custody.
- All clients related they feel good or pretty good about the overall services that are being provided.



# Importance to Social Work Practice and Social Justice

- We need to develop a better tracking system to better meet our permanency goals.
- Income does play a large role on relatives obtaining permanent custody. This could be due to expensive Attorney and court fees
- There is a strong need for more financial support to assist the relatives in obtaining permanent custody.

# Strengths and Weaknesses

- Strength - The results were significant. Income does affect the permanency status.
- Strength - Face to Face interviews were valuable in allowing me to see how the services being provided are viewed by those on the receiving end.
- Weakness - Did not have access to all Kinship Care cases.
- Weakness - Lack of other studies in this area.



# Future Research

- Have access to all cases available.
- Try to do more face to face interviews with clients regarding the services that are being provided.

## References

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